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CBC Newsletter

JUN 09 2005

for members of the Carolina Bird Club, Inc., ornithological society of the Carolinas

Volume 51

June 2005

Number 3

Fall in Charleston, SC September 30-October 2

By Marcia Watkins

Autumn in the Low Country. Saltwater marshes, harbor breezes, and migrating birds make this a great place to end the summer and welcome the fall. Charleston's charms appeal to all of us. The non-birding spouse will especially enjoy historic downtown Charleston with its shops along King Street and in the Market, outstanding restaurants, and carriage tours along the Battery. Other attractions include the SC Aquarium, a boat trip to Fort Sumter, and nearby plantations and gardens. And just in time to welcome the CBC, North America's longest cable stay span bridge will open this summer.

Our hotel meeting center is at the foot of the bridge over the Cooper River on the Mt. Pleasant side. The Holiday Inn Patriot's Point is on Highway 17 (250 Johnnie Dodds Blvd., Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464). When making reservations, ask for the group block, CBC. The rate of \$89 per room (breakfast not included) will be available until August 29. You may reserve rooms online (www.himtplasant.com) by using the group code or by calling the toll-free number 800-290-4004, ext. 110, or the hotel at 843-884-6000.

Field trip destinations include the ocean, barrier islands, saltwater marshes, beaches, some urbanized areas, several waterfront locales, and a plantation. Weather permitting, we plan to make an offshore trip Saturday on the "Thunderstar"

Gulf Stream fishing boat. At a cost of \$35 for an all-day excursion 45-50 miles offshore, we are bound to see some great pelagic birds: Black-capped Petrel, Pomarine Jaeger, Red-necked Phalarope, and Cory's and Audubon's Shearwaters. Nathan Dias will lead this trip. Other boat trips planned are a half-day trip to Deveau Bank from Rockville for terns and shorebirds. A ferry boat ride to Bull's Island is also planned for at least one day at \$30 a head with Coastal Expeditions.

A good half-day trip within close drive of Mt. Pleasant will be a circuit of Patriot's Point, Pitt Street Causeway, and Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island. American Oystercatchers can always be found at low tide in the mud flats at Pitt Street, along with herons, egrets, Brown Pelicans, gulls and terns. On the other side of Charleston along the Ashley River, we will visit Magnolia Plantation and Audubon Swamp Garden. This 500-acre area has many habitats and offers some of the best birding opportunities in the state. A trip to Folly Beach and the ACE Basin (Donnelley and Bear Island WMA) is also being planned.

Nathan Dias, Executive Director of the Cape Romain Bird Observatory, will be our speaker on Friday night. He will give a talk on the history of ornithology in South Carolina. We have reserved a banquet and meeting space for Saturday night at the Holiday Inn. More to come on the dinner and speaker. Plan for your trip to Charleston now. Perhaps you can come early and enjoy a long fall vacation in the Low Country and the "Holy City." I can already taste the she-crab soup!

Updating CBC Directory

If your address, phone number, or email has changed in the past five years, please help us update our CBC Directory by sending in updates or corrections to: Dana Harris, 5009 Crown Point Lane, Wilmington, NC 28409. You can also go to the CBC website to send updates. Our goal is to have a new directory by the end of the summer, but we need to hear from you!

Upcoming CBC Meetings

Virginia Beach - February 2-5, 2006

Asheville - April 28-30, 2006

Savannah - Fall 2006

CBC Memory

By Evelyn Dabbs

Into the early 1970s the Carolina Bird Club meetings held to the tradition of ending the weekend activities with a social hour, followed by a semi-formal dinner with everyone dressed in their Sunday best. Many of the ladies wore evening gowns. As the number of members increased, it became more difficult to find a dining room large enough for all to be seated together and thus ended this era. Instead, people made their own choices as to where to dine and a much more casual mode of dress rapidly became the custom.

Before joining CBC, I had never experienced the delight of being with a group of people; all sharing the same avid interest in birds. Annie Faver, a birder from Eastover, SC and a CBC member had spoken to our garden club about birds and the Carolina Bird Club. My membership application was in the mail the following day! I soon discovered how much fun it was to be birding with others and have the special bonus of everyone being very friendly and helpful.

The Carolina Bird Club remains a very special organization for all interested Carolinians and has enriched the lives of ever so many individuals.

A Rainy, Birdy CBC Weekend in Blowing Rock



*Birding at the Wagner Property
Photo by Joe Bearden*

Rain, fog, cold, and wind didn't stop 153 CBC birders from birding early morning to late afternoon each day on many field trips around the lovely Blowing Rock and Blue Ridge Parkway areas. The

group saw a total of 142 bird species. Some highlights were 25 species of warblers, including Cerulean, Bay-breasted, and Canada; American Bittern at the Wagner Property and along the Parkway; Sora; Ruffed Grouse; Blue-headed Vireo; and Least and Willow Flycatchers.

Thanks so much to **Lori Martin** for coordinating the meeting and to the many field trip leaders. We

appreciate the Wagners giving us permission to bird their wonderful property. Thanks to Dana Harris for running a smooth registration.

Saturday night Lori, Simon Thompson, and Jo Ann Martin led us in a birding trivia contest with displays (the correct answer to a dollar bill wrapped around a razor was a Razorbill!). Len Pardue won the trivia contest and received the "King Birder 2005" award.



There was also a bird fashion show (see

photo by Dan Chambers above). Birders were dressed as a Black-capped Petrel, Merlin, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, Cerulean Warbler, Carolina Chickadee, Red Crossbill, and Purple Martins. Curtis Smalling, mountain biologist with Audubon NC, gave an excellent program Friday on ways birders can help make a difference in conserving bird habitat. Curtis is knowledgeable about birds in the NC mountains, including which birds are seen upslope or down slope in particular areas! Remember to share your bird sightings with Audubon, local land trusts, and wildlife agencies, and to **share your passion of birds with others!**

Thank you Tullie!

After 13 years as CBC Headquarters Secretary, Tullie Johnson announced her resignation in March. An employee at the N.C Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh, Tullie has taken on new responsibilities with the Cary Parks and Recreation Department, plus, President of the Friends of Hemlock Bluffs (a great birding spot). Thank you, Tullie, for your great work for CBC!!

The CBC Executive Committee voted to appoint **Dana Harris** as our new Headquarters Secretary at the Blowing Rock meeting. Many of you already know Dana as our dynamic registration lady as you arrive at meetings (taking over for the wonderful Libba and John Watson a couple years ago!). Our new headquarters address will be: Carolina Bird Club, Inc., 5009 Crown Point Lane, Wilmington, NC 28409.

Just Outside the Window

By Donna Slyce

Maybe, just maybe... Although no one can remember exact dates now, I believe it was an over warm spring day near the end of the school year in 1970 or 1971 when I arrived home to find my mother quite excited to tell me something. Just outside the dining room windows of our rural house, in an area we called “the swamp” because of a natural spring that bubbled up there that kept the ground saturated and watered a line of large sweetgum trees and assorted tupelos, she had seen a bird the likes of which she had never seen before. As she neared the end of her description, she said “I think it was an Ivory-billed Woodpecker.” Even as a ten year old, I knew that such a bird was way off the Richter scale in terms of importance. Now my mother was no trained ornithologist nor even a birder in our currently accepted sense of the word. She paid attention to the backyard birds when she had a few spare moments between running a household for a family of five that included an infant and caring for her ailing parents. We had seen Pileated occasionally in the yard and Mom knew them fairly well.

Thirty five years have dimmed my memory of the exact description she gave me but three key points still stick in my mind. She described the bird as “enormous”. She described in detail the two things that had struck her most forcefully about this bird—an all-black crested head and the voice. She described the voice as “a tiny trumpet, like a toy, like some of your little sister’s toys.” My middle sister had a preference for toys with a noise factor like horns and drums.

I listened carefully. And I got out both of the field guides we had in the house, including Peterson’s East. I remember the chill down my spine when I read R. T. Peterson’s description of the voice of an Ivory-bill – “like a toy trumpet.”

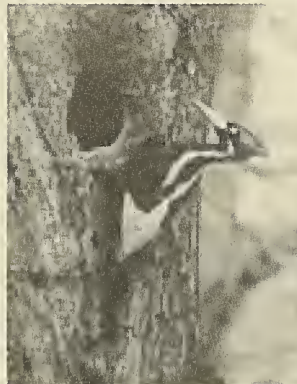
I told Mom we needed to let someone know about this and I was elected to write the letter. In my best handwriting, I wrote out what my mother had described for me and we sent it off. I can’t say whether we sent our letter to a state agency or to a federal agency, but I do remember my

disappointment at receiving, some months later, a form letter in reply.

Later, the fight to save Congaree Swamp from the chainsaws broke out and Alex Sanders made his famous claims about hearing an Ivory-bill in the old-growth part of the swamp that the chainsaws were most eager to take down. I for one believed him. The swamp wasn’t that many miles from us as the Ivory-bill flies.

I can’t say now whether my mother saw an Ivory-bill or not. I can say that like others who have wanted to believe all these years, I would occasionally recall Mom’s big bird with the black head and feel a sparkle of hope. Maybe it was an Ivory-bill. I don’t know. What I do know is that magic happens when and where you least expect it, perhaps just outside your dining room windows on a sunny spring day.

Ivory-billed Woodpecker Found!!



Courtesy of David Allen, 1935

By now you’ve heard about the exciting rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in the Big Woods region of Arkansas! After the discovery, the Big Woods Conservation Partnership (www.ivorybill.org) was formed by The Nature Conservancy, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and others to help restore the bottomland

hardwood and swamp system in the area. You can make a donation for bird conservation to the Lab by calling 1-800-843-BIRD (with a nice choice of woodpecker gifts), or to help protect more bottomland forests in the Big Woods region (the goal is to restore an additional 200,000 acres) call The Nature Conservancy at 1-800-628-6860. John Fitzpatrick, Director of Cornell Lab of Ornithology stated, “Since the first sighting, this has consumed us. We have dedicated our time and our dreams to protecting and conserving this area. These woods are my church. There is no bird like this in the world.”

Editor’s note: With the rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, John Ennis, who wrote the Woodpeckermania 2004 article in the April 2005 CBC Newsletter has asked me to retract his article.

Owls in the Frozen North — CBC Trip to Minnesota *By Simon Thompson*

I don't know how the timing worked, but it certainly did this time. The birding Gods were smiling down on the intrepid CBC birders as they winged their way north from the balmy Carolinas to the promise of snow, ice, and freezing conditions in the far north. We had heard stories of Great Gray Owls "dripping" from the trees and Northern Hawk-Owls atop every telephone pole. We were ready and primed for any "owl extravaganza" awaiting us.

Mike Hendrickson was our intrepid guide for the whole trip and I must admit that having a local guide with an ear on the local bird line was very important. Without the local knowledge we would have missed many birds, including one of the most wanted birds of the trip—Boreal Owl. This endearing owl was watched at length on the side of a fairly busy road. With scopes fixed on it, we could enjoy every field mark and even every feather—what a sight that was.

It was quite a sight watching the Carolina group birding in the snow, as no-one was recognizable without a closer examination. Layer upon layer of clothing all but obscured the obvious field marks of those Carolina birders, so we had to learn to recognize hats, eyes, or bright jackets! We all complained about the cold, but not when we were watching the owls, and boy, there were plenty of owls to go around. Great Grays were a common sight perched on roadside poles, signs, and exposed limbs. Their soft plumage and white "bow-ties" made them unmistakable at almost any range. Northern Hawk-Owls were super distinctive atop telephone poles and bare trees, and who could forget the magnificent Snowy Owls at the airport and the security building? Even though we were almost moved on by the local constabulary!

Birding highlights were many and came on a daily basis. Who could forget the hundreds of Bohemian

Waxwings perched atop some spruce trees in suburban Duluth? How about a feeder thronged with more Common Redpolls than many folks had seen in a lifetime and the flock even contained a redpoll frostier than most – a Hoary Redpoll; Pine Siskins, Black-capped Chickadees, and two Red-breasted Nuthatch added to the feeding frenzy as we stood there enjoying the show. Striking pink male Pine Grosbeaks were seen on a daily basis, and even a feeder covered up with Evening Grosbeaks was worth far more than just a cursory glance for several Carolinas birders. Everyone was getting "lifers" all around.

An early morning adventure for a Spruce Grouse was thwarted by a late breakfast and nasty bathrooms, but we made up for this with four Sharp-tailed Grouse feeding on tree buds along the snowy roadside. Northern Shrikes were also seen every day, although they were still enjoyed whenever we saw them, and who could forget holding peanuts in our hands and enjoying the Gray Jays coming in for food?

Driving in the dry, powdery snow was easier than it looked, although heading out across snowy roads that blended in with the white fields was indeed a little daunting. Thankfully Mike led the way and the convoy of Carolina birders just followed him across the wintry wastelands. Early mornings and early nights were usually the order of the day and lunches were taken on the run, but dinners were a little more relaxed and some were even washed down with some good local ale. For some folks it got even better on the way back to Minneapolis. With a bit of research and a lot of luck we added some Class A birds before heading home. A flock of American Tree Sparrows was flushed from along the roadside; we found a partially hidden Northern Saw-whet Owl in a suburban fir tree and best of all, we watched a gray phase Gyrfalcon perched atop a transmission pole on the outskirts of Hastings in rural Dakota County.

Thanks to Stephen and John for being able drivers and thanks to 22 keen Carolina birders for their good spirit, sense of humor, and willingness to head out into the snowy wastelands in search of birds. Now roll of this together and you have what is called without question a darn good birding trip!



Northern Hawk Owl
Photo by Rob Bierregaard

CBC Life Members

We thought it was time to give special recognition to our current list of Life Members of the Carolina Bird Club!

Wilma Abrams-Clinton, SC
Henry Armistead-Philadelphia, PA
Charles H Babcock, Jr.-Winston-Salem, NC
Ruth Barbour-Morehead City, NC
Faith Bell-Tryon, NC
William P Blakeslee-Atlanta, GA
Susan Campbell-Whispering Pines, NC
Mrs. J.E. Cannon-Florence, SC
Dr. J. H. Carter, III-Southern Pines, NC
Walker L Casey-Raleigh, NC
Hartsell Cash-Winston-Salem, NC
Sandy & Nidhi Cash-Durham, NC
M.L. Cates, Jr.-Spartanburg, SC
William Hugh Craft-Greensboro, NC
Mr/Mrs Charles Chapin-Hilton Head Island, SC
Joseph B Cheshire, Jr.-Southern Pines, NC
William & Florapear Cobey-Charlotte, NC
Edward Cone-Princeton, NJ
Bob & Sara Cook-Salisbury, NC
Dwight Cooley-Decatur, AL
Sam Cooper-Wilmington, NC
Mrs. Barrett Crook-New London, NC
John Daughtry-Greenville, NC
Richard J Davis-Rocky Mount, NC
Kenneth H Dubke-Chattanooga, TN
David M Dumond-Wilmington, NC
Paul Dumont-Arlington, VA
Mrs. Paul A Dunbar-Spartanburg, SC
June Wesley Elliott-Murrells Inlet, SC
Charles & Nancy Elmore-Gastonia, NC
John Ennis-Leland, NC
Albert Fisher-Durham, NC
Daniel T Forster-Pensacola, FL
Judith Fortney-Durham, NC
Tommy Fulcher & Elizabeth Morey-Kitty Hawk, NC
John Fussell, III-Morehead City, NC
Buddy & Ann Garrett-Jacksonville, NC
Charlotte Goedsche & Cynthia Janes-Weaverville, NC
Betty Sue Grandy-Darlington, SC
Dr. Gilbert S Grant-Sneads Ferry, NC
Rosa Lee Hardin-Travelers Rest, SC
Fernanda Hastie-Charleston, SC
Eve Hillig-Jacksonville, FL
Bill & Susan Hilton-York, SC
Robert P Holmes, III-New Bern, NC
Dr. Murray G Honick & Dr. Renee R. Lamm-Murrells Inlet, SC

Mr/Mrs James P Ingram-Charleston, SC
First Colony Inn-Nags Head, NC
Dr E Wayne Irvin-Southern Pines, NC
Mrs. Frank J Jervey -Clemson, SC
Joe Jones-Berryville, VA
Mr/Mrs. Carl E Kleiber-Charleston, SC
Palmer E Krantz, III-Columbia, SC
Ruth Kuhlman-Mt. Pleasant, SC
Louise E Lacoss-Hilton Head Is, SC
Carolina H Lane-Decatur, GA
Mr/Mrs James B Lasley-Charlotte, NC
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Sidney Maddock-Buxton, NC
Dwayne Martin-Taylorsville, NC
Lori Martin-Maiden, NC
John T McBride, Jr.-Shreveport, LA
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Mrs. J.H. McIlwain.-Brevard, NC
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Dr. Charles W McRae-Marion, SC
Ellen C Merry-Augusta, GA
Patricia Metz-Townsend, GA
Medhat Mohamed-Raleigh, NC
Dr. John T Monroe, Jr.-Chapel Hill, NC
Susan Moore-Winston-Salem, NC
Terry Moore-Roswell, GA
Jonathan L Newton-Tarboro, NC
Dr./Mrs. Paul Nifong-Clemmons, NC
Nongame Wildlife Program Manager-Raleigh, NC
Sarah M Nooe-Monroe, NC
Robert Odear-Nashville, TN
Dennis E Ose-Cary, NC
Esther & Len Pardue-Asheville, NC
Steve Patterson-Lancaster, SC
Richard H Peake, Jr.-Galveston, TX
Dr/Mrs Harold S Pettit-Charleston, SC
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Bill & Meg Rawls-Morehead City, NC
J.C. Raymond-Hampton, SC
Anne Worsham Richardson-Charleston, SC
Chandler Robbins-Laurel, MD
William G Roe-Tucson, AZ
Russell E Rogers, Jr.-Sequim, WA
Dr. Helen Rogers-Laurinburg, NC
Janet S Sandburg-Hendersonville, NC
Margaret Sandburg-Asheville, NC
Harriet Sato-Raleigh, NC
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Mrs. Walton H Scott Jr.-Inman, SC

Mrs. Ben Settles-San Antonio, TX
Louise W Sharp-Eden, NC
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Morris D Williams-Lawrenceburg, TN
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Robert P Wood-Camden, SC

Welcome New Members

Mary Annkolb, -Barnwell, SC
Luis Campos-Asheville, NC
Tim Carstens-Sylva, NC
Jimmy Dodson-Rougemont, NC
Arthur & Linda Dudycha-Rutherfordton, NC
H. Linn Finger-Lincolnton, NC
Loren Hintz-Chapel Hill, NC
Chris Huffstickler-Lake Wylie, SC
Walt Kent-Lenoir, NC
N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences Library-Raleigh, NC
Susan Mackinnon-Durham, NC
Rick Mashburn-Winston-Salem, NC
Kathleen O'Grady-Irmo, SC
Ben & Carol Ringer-Hendersonville, NC
Audra Rourk-Moncks Corner, SC
Felicia Sanders-McClellanville, SC
Donald J. Schwab-Suffolk, VA
Jim Seaman-Raleigh, NC
Alice Steinke-Columbia, SC
Wild Birds Unlimited-Kitty Hawk, NC
Tom & Christine Warren-Durham, NC

Deceased

Eleanor Colton-New Bern, NC

A Birding Story

By Bob Holmes

If you are one of my birding associates, you have heard me tell this story a dozen times, so might want to skip over to the next article.

It is interesting that over the years so many experiences or events that were viewed with much expectation or which seemed so important at the time tend to meld with life's other lackluster memories. The experience I shall relate is from the other side of that coin—a day that initially could be adequately described as enjoyable has, over time, become my most outstanding birding memory.

When an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina, it was my pleasure and good fortune to develop a friendship with a classmate and fellow birder, Tom Uzzell, from Charleston, SC. Tom was one of the “rediscoverers” of the Bachman's Warbler in 1948. I was delighted when he invited me to spend a weekend with him and his family. It was the first weekend in May, 1951. We would go birding in the I'On Swamp (just north of Charleston) that Saturday, where he would show me the warbler.

It was soon after sunrise on a bright spring day when we turned off Highway 17 onto a dirt road and then a single lane woods road for perhaps a mile. We had been walking for no more than 10 minutes, after pulling off and leaving the car, when Tom said, “There it is!”

“What?”

“That trill. It's the Bachman's Warbler.”

Parenthetically, let me say that the song I heard did not resemble that of the Northern Parula, as is stated in some field guides. Rather, it was a short trill rendered in a pitch that was sweeter than that of a Chipping Sparrow and with the notes wider spaced. How do I remember after 54 years? Because I still have the description I jotted in the margin of my Peterson's *A Field Guide to Birds*.

I had been told that even when located, the bird could be difficult to spot, so I knew our work was still cut out for us. Not so. We stepped into a small clearing and within minutes were getting a terrific view of a male Bachman's Warbler. It was a small warbler actively feeding in a thick edge at about eye level. Piece of cake! Tom pointed out that its chin was yellow, that the black bib did not extend all the way to the base of the lower mandible as was depicted in some field guides. The whole quest had been so quick and easy. So we checked it off and moved on to see some other good birds—White Ibises, Mississippi Kites, and similar rarities. We caught and bagged a nice cottonmouth for the Charleston Museum's collection. At the time, seeing the warbler was just one part of a pleasant day of birding. For three years, the species had been regularly found. Why not assume it was here to stay? I could return and see it another spring if I wished.

Need I say that all of this now is but a bittersweet memory? More bitter than sweet! If I had been armed with foresight, I would have spent the day assimilating, savoring the experience, listening again and again to the song, searching for a female Bachman's. No, I moved on in what was not to be my last act of ignorance and poor judgment. Perhaps this little story is a metaphor relevant to some other events in life.

“Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying...”

Robert Herrick

CBC Bonus Trips

Cape May, NJ-September 22-26

By Steve Patterson

In his book, *Birdfinder*, Jerry Cooper says, "A fall trip to Cape May is pure enjoyment." Those who have been there on just the right day will agree. This trip attempts to put a small group of birders in the right place at the right time for three energetic days of maximum migration species enjoyment.

We will leave Charlotte at 7:00 am on Thursday, September 22, stopping in Raleigh (if needed) to collect the rest of our group. We will systematically bird the Cape May peninsula on two of the three days available to us. The remaining day will include a trip up the coast to the Brigantine division of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. With favorable weather, we should find over 150 species. The return trip will take place Monday, September 26.

Group size is limited to twelve participants. The cost of the trip is \$510.00 per person, to include transportation (minibus) and lodging (double occupancy). Once the trip roster is filled, further details will be mailed to the participants. Please contact Steve Patterson, trip leader, to register or for more information about the trip before sending in your registration fee. You may contact Steve at 803-286-4998 or at SCBirder@aol.com.

Ridge Junction Overlook-August 28

By Lori Martin



Join us for a morning you won't soon forget! We will arrive at Ridge Junction Overlook (milepost 355.8 on the Blue Ridge Parkway, Mt. Mitchell area) in time to view the spectacular sunrise—and watch in awe as a steady stream of southbound migrants make their way

through the gap. We once counted 116 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds zoom through in a three hour time frame! If you have trouble identifying fall warblers, then this is a trip for you! The birds come to us—so don't forget your lawn chair and enjoy the parade of Tennessee Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and Baltimore Orioles. It can be rather chilly here, even in late August, so bring layers!

We'll meet at 6:00 am at the Folk Arts Center (milepost 382 on the Blue Ridge Parkway) in Asheville, NC on Sunday, August 28. Cost is \$10 per person. There are many choices for lodging in the Asheville area. Please register with field trip leaders Lori Martin (828-638-1193 or loriannkayaker@charter.net) or Dwayne Martin (828-244-0539 or redxbill@charter.net) before sending in your registration money.

Carolina Bird Club Registration Form

Name(s) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone _____ Evening phone _____ Email _____

Registration for the Ridge Junction bonus trip costs \$10/pp paid in advance.

Registration for the Cape May bonus trip costs \$510/pp paid in advance.

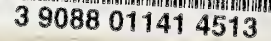
Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ for _____ member(s) to join the **Ridge Junction, NC August 27 trip.**

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ for _____ member(s) to join the **Cape May, NJ September 22-26 trip.**

Make check payable to Carolina Bird Club and send to: CBC, 5009 Crown Point Lane, Wilmington, NC 28409.



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August 28, Ridge Junction Overlook, NC
September 22-26, Cape May, NJ

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